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ADDRESS

BEFORE

THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

OF THE

MISSOURI UNIVERSITY,

BY

R. L. TODD,

16-6
JULY 1st, 1853.



COLUMBIA:

PRINTED AT THE SENTINEL OFFICE.

1853.

CORRESPONDENCE.

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MISSOURI UNIVERSITY, July 1, 1853.

R. L. TODD, Esq.—In behalf of the Alumni of Missouri University, we tender thanks to you for the very appropriate, beautiful and able address delivered before us this morning, and solicit a copy for publication.

Yours, very respectfully,

JAS. H. PARKER,
JNO. M. GORDON,
W. T. LENOIR.

COLUMBIA, July 1, 1853.

GENTLEMEN: In reply to your note of this morning, asking for publication a copy of the Address delivered before the Association of the Alumni, I tender you my thanks for the very flattering manner in which you were pleased to speak of my effort. I enclose you the copy desired, trusting that your partiality has not induced you to overestimate its merits.

With high regard for you personally, I am, Gentlemen,

Very truly yours,

R. L. TODD.

Messrs. GORDON, PARKER, LENOIR, *Committee.*

A D D R E S S .

FELLOW-ALUMNI,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

Twelve years have elapsed since the University of Missouri, endowed by the munificence of our National Legislature, was permanently organized. It was committed to the guidance and direction of the accomplished and distinguished gentleman and scholar, President LATHROP, aided by a corps of able and zealous Professors; whose number, however, was sadly limited, accommodated to the exigencies of a new institution, without a library, without apparatus, with a character to establish, a patronage to create, sympathies to enlist, an unproductive fund, and struggling under pecuniary embarrassments.

Its location at this point was secured, as we all know, by a handsome and liberal donation from the citizens of Boone. This was no slight indication of their estimate of its future value; and while it affords proof of a high order of their intelligence and wise forethought, it portrays in the liveliest colors their enlarged philanthropy and zeal in the great cause of sound and thorough education. All honor, then, from us, Alumni of the University, to those who have thus manifested their high appreciation of the necessity and value of cultivating the minds and hearts of the young; who have given so freely of their goods for this end, and who, having builded the house, this spacious and tasteful Temple of Science, have faithfully stood by its fortunes, watched its progress with solicitude, and proven their devotion to the best interests of their kind. With them, *especially*, must its prosperity be matter of paramount importance; and while it should be the pride, as it is the interest and duty, of the

State to foster and cherish it into a richer and a manlier growth, yet it is with peculiar pleasure and self-gratulation, that the citizens of Boone, its earliest friends and most constant patrons, must witness its steady advance to a high position among its sister institutions, and find it a source of healthful, invigorating, elevating influences.

From its first graduating class in 1843, of two young men, one of whom has now the pleasing duty of addressing you assigned to him, its progress, though gradual, has been steady owing to increased interest and attention to the subject of education, to our greater population, to its multiplied resources of instruction and its established character; and with the close of the current collegiate year fourteen young gentlemen terminate their connection with it, making a total of seventy-seven who have completed the prescribed course of study, and have received the honors of the University.

This number necessarily excludes the far greater number of those who have availed themselves for a time of its instructions, and hence is no measure of its usefulness. This is but its first fruits—the beginning of its work in the glorious career open to it, in which it is to stamp its impress upon vast numbers of the young in the Valley of the Mississippi, if it is only true to itself and faithful to the high interests committed to its keeping. The Literary Institutions of a country are the nurseries of its genius and its talent. From them may fairly be expected to proceed influences which shall mould its thought and control its action to a degree which defies calculation. It is a glorious truth indeed, that we are often gladdened by seeing men attain to eminence and distinction and filling extensive spheres of usefulness, who have surmounted the disadvantages of defective early training; and many, possessing all the elements of success and capable of distinguished action, are embarrassed by the want of early educational facilities, and have needed only the supply of this want to have won for themselves consideration and fame. Yet it is but reasonable to look for educated men, for those who shall leave their im-

press upon the literature, the thought, the history and the destiny of the country, to those institutions whose business it is to create and to form them. A great genius may force his way up to distinction, usefulness, fame, in despite of the want of these advantages which would have aided his ascent, and, perhaps, by their liberalizing tendency, have given a wider range of thought, a more just and harmonious development of mind. And the most glowing chapter of our history, the one most fraught with instruction and with promise—richest with grateful thoughts—most gladdening to the heart of the philanthropist—is that which tells us of the struggles and triumphs of these *self-made* men, these untaught sons of genius, whose contributions to our Literature, Science and Art form so considerable a portion of our cherished treasure. Still they constitute but the exceptions, and as we must look in the physical world, for results only from causes adapted to produce them, so in the mental and moral world may we reasonably hope for excellence only from early and assiduous culture. And for this we must rely, primarily and mainly, on the tone and influence of our educational agents—and hence the crowning interest attached to our Colleges and Universities, assuming, as they do, the training and moulding of the young and plastic mind, as their appropriate field—and thus perpetuating their own character. Their Alumni are indeed their “epistles, known and read of all men.”

Few subjects then are so well adapted to excite our liveliest interest, to enlist our warmest sympathies, or so readily to arouse our apprehensions, as those connected with our Literary Institutions. They are the property of the country, fostered and sustained by the public sentiment, which they in turn serve to modify, direct or perpetuate; and a well conducted and successful experiment in their establishment is a proper source of public gratulation.

But with none can this feeling of interest be more lively than with those who are indebted for their early literary culture to the successful candidate for patronage and favor

whose necessity and value have been already conceded, whose halls are thronged by ingenuous youth, whose teachings are regarded by an enlightened public as sound and valuable. While then, gentlemen, we meet here to-day to revive old associations, to mingle again in these halls, so often heretofore the witnesses of our youthful trials, failures and triumphs, and contribute our efforts for the success of the Institution; while troops of thronging memories, merry fancies and half-remembered sorrows, are crowding upon us, it can be no slight addition to the gratification of our re-union to witness the evidences of substantial growth and progress of our *Alma Mater*. We must rejoice to see the vast increase of educational facilities, a growing library, extensive apparatus and cabinets, an ample and productive fund, and multiplied chairs of instruction—adequate to the wants of our giant young State, so expressively manifested by the numbers on its catalogue. May its success keep pace with our progressive age; may it be foremost in the cause of sound and useful popular instruction—cherished by the State until its doors shall be open to confer society's best and richest gift—a free education—on the poorest child of the commonwealth.

But, gentlemen, while the present affords satisfaction and the future is full of hope, it cannot but be grateful to us to review the scenes of the past and to trace the course of our fellow-Alumni. We find them hardly yet ripening into matured manhood, already reflecting credit upon their instructors—some in the more unobtrusive, though not less valuable, pursuits of private life—some occupying chairs in the University itself—rising members of the legal and medical professions—participating in the deliberations and discussions of legislative bodies—"embassadors for Christ," devoting their energies to the study of His word and the extension of His kingdom. And while we exchange congratulations upon the attained success and promised usefulness of our fellows, let us recall tenderly the memory of the departed and pay our tribute of respect and affection to him, whose

early promise was so soon and so sadly withdrawn—whose unfolding energies were but ripening for a premature grave. The heart sickens and recoils at the death of the young. We can understand that the *old man*, full of honors and years, after a life of labor and of usefulness, having drained the cup of pleasure and bitterly felt the inadequacy of earth to satisfy the longings of the immortal spirit, should be expected, as a shock of corn *fully ripened*, to be gathered to his fathers—aye, should even await with anxiety the time of his release from earth, when “this mortal shall put on immortality.” But the young man, just opening on the bravery and glory of matured manhood, in the beauty and fullness of his young life, with the rich, warm blood coursing proudly through his veins, having passed the dependent periods of childhood and youth, with beating heart and flushed hope, hails with joy promise of the future, tinted with the glowing colors of a fancy not yet chastened by disappointment. And it is one of the sealed mysteries in the economy of Providence that he should be so suddenly removed hence—with aims yet unrealized—and thus disappoint the cherished dreams of friends, whose clustering hopes clung in luxuriant richness around him. Such was the sad and early end of the lamented ALLEN, whom alone we fail to reckon of our number to-day. The experience of each, doubtless, affords but too many of such saddening thoughts—our hearts are fraught with many recollections of disappointment and of grief—yet we cannot but have found life full of beauty, full of joy, and full of triumphs. The buoyancy of youthful hope has been somewhat lessened by our experience of its liability to overcalculating fondness—the roseate hues of youthful anticipations have been colored with the more sombre tints of actual existences—the gorgeousness of the panorama sketched by an exuberant and glowing fancy, has been toned down by the darker coloring and less unreal objects of each one’s history, and often we have been forced to yield up, as the “airy nothings” of a too poetic brain,

“Myriads of hopes and joys and burning loves,
That seemed like things of immortality.”

Life, with each and all, is an earnest, often a sad, reality—allowing but small space for the “piping times of peace”—filled up with daily duties and daily trials—demanding of each an account of our discharge of high and solemn trusts. And it must be so from the very necessities of our nature.—The world without us, thronged with objects of beauty and of interest, is exquisitely adapted to enlist and engross the world within us, to call all our faculties into exercise, and yield to every desire its appropriate gratification. Each world re-acts upon the other, affording pleasure more or less alloyed, as the relations existing between them are less or more distinctly appreciated and observed. In the perception of these relations lies the great problem of our existence here—whose practical solution, as escape from the effort is impossible, is found in each one’s daily life—whose full solution is the apostolic “*Oi chromenoi to kosmo touto os me katachromenoi.*” Our nature is essentially earnest and passionate—the higher its type, the more perfect its development, the more intensely earnest it becomes. And happiness is possible only so far as our varied cravings and desires are met by some object in serious harmony with our nature, adapted to our capacities, suited to enlist our profound sympathies. And it is utterly and forever vain to suppose that our demands and necessities can be met by anything short of the great and solemn, (to each of us our own are great and solemn,) duties, trials, joys and triumphs, as we find them in us and around us. Mere fanciful conceit can but stay us for a moment in our onward search for the more real and earnest. The full employment of one faculty cannot restrain the others from seeking out their appropriate objects of interest and gratification. The mind is insatiate until all its powers have been fully exercised, and all its wants been fully met—and he is false to himself and recreant to his high trust who fails harmoniously to develop all the faculties that God has given him. To do this, the pursuit of the trifles of the present time, even our highest, noblest employments here, will not suffice. The varied fields of Science

and of Art, of Literature and of Song, tempting us as they do to linger in long and unsatisfied delight, are not extensive enough to fill up the measure of our capacities—to exhaust our powers of future effort, to quench our cravings for yet more exalted joys. There is that in each of us, which in all goodness, was not intended by our Creator to be satisfied with earthly delights or triumphs—aspirations after a nearer approach to Deity himself—an earnest longing for fuller acquaintance with the mysteries of our *being here* and of that higher sphere, towards which we feel we are tending. To Him, “who taught the thought to soar,” will our thoughts ascend; and from such contemplations come our richest teachings of wisdom and of love. And as He has given us no desire without furnishing us with its guide and director, so in this He has not left himself without a witness to each—a monitor to warn against violations of His established laws—to lead us back—by suffering it may be—to the path of obedience and of safety. It matters not, for our present purpose, that we adopt the nomenclature of one or another school of ethical or mental science; that we style this monitor, conscience, moral sense, or sense of duty; that we view it as the result of the action of the intellect upon our sensitive nature, or as an independent faculty—whether its existence may be best accounted for on the utilitarian theory, or as an inherent perception of *right* and love of it for its own sake, without regard to its effects. These are questions which have long been mooted among inquirers into the science of mind, and were discussed, with perhaps as much clearness and force, by the ancients in the Groves of the Academy and in the Stoic Porch, as in more recent times. It suffices us most amply that the fact exists of the perception by all of a sense of moral obligation—ever present and, in a greater or less degree, ever active—that the stern, inevitable word *ought*, with its peculiar force is perpetually recurring to all. That this is a fact of no mean significance would seem to be apparent at a glance. And yet, strange as it may be, the value of this *moral sense*, this perception

of right and wrong, with its instantaneons approval of the one and condemnation of the other, as an object of education and training in the young, and particularly as a means of success with the more advanced, has been sadly underrated. The inherent and not unnatural pride of reason, even when not blinded by prejudice or passion, induces it, in the earlier stages of its tottering progress, to reject the offered aid of its young but earlier born helpmate—to turn a deaf ear to its voice of warning or entreaty—and to trust to its own unassisted strength to reach its conclusions. And hence comes the sadder consequence, that while in the preparation for the great “battle of life,” every attention may be paid to the physical, and all the resources of skill and science are lavished upon the training of the intellect, no place is allowed, and no education prepared, for the moral sense, *as one of the agents*, by which we may hope to achieve the conquest over the admiration, love and honors of the world. And hence men do not estimate at anything approaching its true importance the value of this sense, *as an element of success in life*.

Of course it is not intended to under-estimate the office of the intellect in our guidance and direction, to detract aught from its conceded value as a prominent cause of individual and social elevation and greatness. This were indeed a fruitless effort, so long as it is by conflict of mind with mind that conviction is produced or motives to action supplied—so long as the relations of a single truth to other truths are not universally known and appreciated—or while there remains one element or combination of elements in the material world, which has not been brought into subjection to the human will, or which scientific research has not made the accessible subject of our study—the subservient handmaid to our happiness. The relations of man to man, of mind and matter, of every moral, mental and physical truth to every other truth, form the appropriate field for intellectual research and enquiry, glowing with beauty, enrapturing by its interest, and rewarding the researcher after its mysteries with its treasures of thought and its wonders of love. As

long as there is in this extensive and inviting field one spot unilluminated by the glorious flood-light of Science, failing to contribute its portion to human knowledge and human advancement, or not radiant with its Maker's glory and beaming with proofs of His goodness, so long must and ought the intellect to hold its glorious pathway, alike among God's giant and animalcule creations, enriching its possessor with its priceless contributions, adding to the knowledge and well-being of man and revealing in increasing effulgence his Maker's excellent glory. There can be no fear then that due consideration will not always be given to the intellect, in every stage of the educational progress. Well founded apprehensions may, however, be entertained that undue reliance will be placed upon that as the source of success, and a degree of cultivation bestowed upon it, out of all proportion, and to the neglect of the moral faculties, which constitute a, perhaps but little less sure, means of attaining distinction here. It is true indeed, that every liberally educated man is expected, required to study *Ethics as a Science*. And it is doubtless generally true that its facts and principles are received and regarded as valuable truths—well worthy of attention and consideration, *after* each shall have secured the object most attractive to him in life.

Few indeed dissent from the cardinal principles of morality—few gainsay the imperious claims of natural and moral law to respect and obedience; and yet, even while those claims are admitted as just, they are practically denied—and those who are firm in their conviction of the truth of perhaps a sound theory and zealous in their advocacy of the pure doctrines of an enlightened faith, are yet found in the daily and direct disobedience of the injunctions of the very law, for whose supreme claims to respect they contend most earnestly. The truth is conceded but disregarded—the necessity of obedience to law is granted, and yet obedience is refused and the law defied. And it has well nigh become a reproach to the educated mind of the country, that while having the most profound acquaintance with the sol-

emn, weighty truths of moral science, and yielding the most cordial recognition of the claims of moral law, it yet manifests apparent utter indifference to the distinctions between virtue and vice, and the most flagrant disregard of every principle recognized as moral truth, when there may seem to be opposition between such a principle and the attainment of its own cherished objects. And it is well worthy of enquiry, why it is that educated men, receiving moral truth after investigation, are as little, often far less, impressed with it, less careful for its conservation, less solieitous to avoid the appearance of esteeming it lightly, than the uneducated mind, which is true to its instincts, and true, in its action, to its living faith. And the question suggests its answer—the faith of the one is *living*—that of the other speculative, inoperative, dead. Our life is a ceaseless struggle between the aspirations and the hopes that lead us upward, by the cultivation of the spirit, and those that draw us earthward to the gratification of our sensual appetites or to the cultivation of the intellect as a means of present power and present happiness; and the enjoyments afforded by objects of our daily experience are far more seductive than those of which the *senses* do not take cognizance. A thirst for temporary applause, or an early triumph, induce but too many to adopt, while they condemn, a mistaken policy, and sacrifice every hope of a wider and more enduring fame for some paltry, early-won advantage.

In every age, more especially in our own day of intense excitement and of progress, with our raging thirst for material wealth and political preferment, men need to realize that a violation of the moral law, disregard of the dictates of the moral sense, will be followed by suffering and moral debasement, as surely as physical suffering awaits the transgressor of physical law—that it is a great truth—alike in the spiritual as in the material world—that “whatsoever a man sows of that shall he also reap”—and that he, whose controlling, paramount object it is to win earthly honor, preferment or gain, at the sacrifice of other and higher consid-

rations, and thus sows to the flesh, shall indeed reap—*corruption*.

Our mental habitudes are those which we ourselves form, and few impressions are ever wholly erased from the susceptible mind, but become, as it were, incorporated with and part of the mind itself. Hence, while a single act of *wilful wrong* vitiates and blunts the moral sense and removes the safeguard to the commission of any number of similar acts, and becomes part of our past history, it forms also the groundwork and basis of our future history; and as well may we swallow poison and expect entire impunity from injury, as to suppose that we do not debase and degrade ourselves, sully and defile the purity of our moral nature, by a single wilful departure from the clear line of duty. Such an act does violence to our Heaven-born monitor, obscures our moral sight, and forces us to view objects through a discolored medium and with an obliquity of vision, which must forever impede, if not totally prevent, a just and accurate perception of them and their relations. With what care then should we guard against being tempted, by any consideration of apparent present advantage, to deviate from the strictest requirements of our God-given monitor—with what assiduity should we *cultivate the habit* of implicit obedience to its dictates—and with what scorn and indignation should we reject any station, or power, or honor, for which we must pay the price of a sacrifice of principle or of truth. One such sacrifice, unknown it may be to all besides him who made it, will color the whole course of his future life, and leave on his character a dark and corrupting stain, whose *tendency* is to destroy his self-respect, strip him of all the dignity, purity and elevation of manhood, undermine every virtue and render him a faint-hearted coward, dreading and shrinking from exposure, an offensive, loathsome, moral ruin. It matters not what may have been the success of his scheme—what the reward of honor or of profit, which may have waited upon his abandonment of truth. No success and no reward can compensate a *correctly* educated man,

who estimates things at their true value, for his wilful forfeiture of his part of that bond of union among men, that excelling virtue, that alone conservative principle—Truth—whose full representation, as He is its embodiment, is God.

But, Gentlemen, He has not made his handiwork so clumsily, has not constructed it upon such vitiated principles, that violations of his laws are necessary to success here—that every really valuable end in life may not be secured most surely by perfect conformity to all His commands; and the thought is a foul libel on His character. On the contrary, it is a sublime truth, rich with promise and with hope, that the assiduous cultivation of the moral sense and regard for its high behests, *are profitable* for the life that now is—and its high rewards and honors are most readily gained by him whose stern sense of duty and principle revolt at every compromise of truth—who regards the preservation of his own purity and integrity as of more value to him than the favor of men, when won by subterfuge, trickery or dishonorable artifice. And sad indeed would it be were it otherwise; and slight must be the gratification derived from success, bitter the consequences attendant upon it, when, as is too often true, it has been obtained by the surrender of every principle that ennobles and dignifies manhood.

But success in the pursuits and object of this life is valuable more as a means than as an end. And while God continues to have a scheme to execute in the world, He will always find a place for every man to occupy and means for him to use.—will give him that measure of success best for him—*good* gifts rather than those which may be most attractive—will point him to his field of labor and see to it that he has the privilege of doing His will. And this is a far more important end than the attainment of this honor or that place of profit.

And this great truth—that He will help us to work out His purposes, and place us in just the situation most favorable for the accomplishment of that end—“received into the depths of the soul, will germinate there and bear fruit a

thousand fold, explaining and connecting and glorifying innumerable things, apparently the most unlike and insignificant"—will

"So inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thought, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings."

Actuated, gentlemen, by these principles, sustained by high and elevating considerations, we may remain calm and self-poised, proof against despondency from defeat, gathering strength and hope from every effort, and may well afford to live without all *that worldly* success, to obtain which we must sacrifice moral purity. Thus will our names not only be, but justly be honorable names. Thus will our association most surely secure the valuable objects of its efforts. Promotive as it will be of social intercourse and pleasure among us, who are one in our early attachments and pursuits, it will give us the will and the power to concentrate our influence and aid in building up this, our literary parent, and extending its sphere of activity and of usefulness.—Widely separated already by varying fortune, some in the sunny south, some on the inviting shores of the Pacific, and others dotting thickly the bosom of our mighty valley, and yearly receiving accessions to our number—we all have at last one endearing tie in common. Let that tie inspire us with the noble aim of being one in object and in effort—worthy of us and of our age—and while we remember that "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy," let us learn to contemplate apparent defeat following honest effort, as the precursor of more valuable and stable success. Keeping green and fresh the memory of our early ties, and annually turning aside from the dusty, weary pathway of life to luxuriate in fulness of joy, in the remembrances and friendships of the past, we may renew our conflict with life,

with higher hope and purer, firmer faith—fuller of charity for our fellows, richer in love for all God's creatures—and strive with manlier purpose for the realization, to us and them, of His choicest blessings. United in the same cause and pressing forward to the attainment of the same ends, animated by the same soul-inspiring zeal, and yet pursuing different paths and hoping for success by the use of varying, perhaps antagonistic, means, let us cherish the thought of our oneness and harmony; recognizing amid all our struggles and conflicts in life our union and brotherhood, not from a similar *political or religious shibboleth*—not from party names or arbitrary classifications—but from an earnest devotion to our educational interests and to whatever tends to elevate the character, promote the happiness, increase the value and subserve the moral purity, of MAN.



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